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**Speaking Notes for
THE HONOURABLE ROB NICHOLSON, P.C., Q.C.,
M.P. for Niagara Falls
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
for the
Announcement of Royal Assent for the
*Tackling Violent Crime Act***

**Ottawa, Ontario
February 28, 2008**

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Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

I am pleased to be here today with Minister Blackburn and Senator LeBreton to mark the occasion of the Governor General giving Royal Assent to our Government's *Tackling Violent Crime Act* – Bill C-2.

Our Government promised to tackle crime and strengthen the security of Canadians in our *Speech from the Throne*, and Bill C-2 is a very important part of our plan.

So important, in fact, that we made this legislation a confidence bill. And the Senate has realized that the bill had to pass in order for our Government to continue doing what Canadians expect and deserve – making laws that will keep our streets and communities safer.

Among other significant changes to Canada's criminal law, the Royal Assent of C-2 signals an end to lenient penalties for those who commit serious or violent gun crimes.

The reforms in this bill will:

- Toughen sentencing and bail provisions for those who commit serious gun crimes;
- Prevent dangerous, high-risk offenders who threaten our communities from offending again and again;
- Better protect Canada's children from sexual predators; and
- Provide police with the tools they need to crack down on those who drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

As you know, the legislation has been extensively studied and debated by the House of Commons – both in its current form and as separate pieces of legislation in the last session of Parliament.

The Senate has done its job and passed this legislation into law – which is ~~what~~ Canadians expect and deserve. These changes have been long overdue, but late is better than never.

With our *Tackling Violent Crime Bill* receiving Royal Assent today, the days of soft, lenient penalties are over.

Dangerous criminals who threaten to our communities will now get the jail time and penalties they

deserve.

This legislation now joins the list of accomplishments by this Government in tackling crime over the past two years. They include

- passing legislation to increase penalties for those convicted of street racing;
- passing legislation to end house arrest for serious personal injury and violent offences, including sexual assault;
- introducing a National Anti-Drug Strategy, including legislation that would provide mandatory jail time for serious drug crimes;
- tabling legislation to strengthen the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*; and announcing a comprehensive review of the Act this year;
- introducing legislation to protect Canadians against identity theft; and
- investing in crime prevention community projects across Canada that target youth.

We are proud to have pushed for these changes, and today, families and communities across Canada can feel safer.

I am very pleased that this legislation has been endorsed by the Senate, and now our Government can carry out the duty of protecting our citizens to the fullest extent.

Thank you. Now Minister Blackburn will say a few words...

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Date Modified: **2008-06-27**